

LOUISIANA SHRIMP TASK FORCE

MINUTES

April 21, 2011

LOUISIANA ROOM
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES
2000 QUAIL DRIVE
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call and Introduction of Members – Mark Schexnayder
- III. Selection of the Chairman
- IV. Review of Act 606 and charge of the Shrimp Task Force – Mark Schexnayder
- V. Filing of Personal Financial Disclosure Tier 2.1 Form with the Louisiana Board of Ethics
– David Lavergne
- VI. Adoption of Standard Operating Procedures – Mark Schexnayder
- VII. Shrimp Promotion and Marketing Activities – Ewell Smith
 - o Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board
 - o Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Regional Plan
 - o Nationwide Seafood Coalition
- VIII. Presentation of the Voluntary Shrimp Certification Program – Jon Bell
 - o License Moratorium
 - o Turtle Excluder Device (TED) regulations
- IX. Set Next Meeting Date and New Agenda Items
- X. Public Comment
- XI. Other Business
- XII. Next Meeting/Agenda
- XIII. Adjournment

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF

THE LOUISIANA SHRIMP TASK FORCE

Thursday, April 21, 2011, 9:30 AM

Mark Schexnayder called the meeting to order and stated this is the first meeting of the reorganization of shrimp task force.

Mr. Schexnayder asked members to speak clearly into the microphones as they stated their names and titles.

In Attendance:

Members

Danny Babin/Representative of Shrimp Processor Advisory Panel
Alan Gibson/Louisiana Shrimp Processor
Dean Blanchard/Louisiana Dock Owner
Mark Abraham/Chairman and Louisiana Shrimp Processor
Clint Guidry/Louisiana Shrimp Harvester

Lance Nacio/Louisiana Shrimp Harvester

Alternates

Acy Cooper/Louisiana Shrimp Harvester

Bryon Despaux/Louisiana Shrimp Harvester

Kristen Michael Baumer/Louisiana Shrimp Processor

Andrew Blanchard/Louisiana Shrimp Processor

Ex-Officio Members/Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Designees

Mark Schexnayder/Office of Fisheries

David Lavergne/Economist

Governor's Office Designee

Cloyce Clark/Policy Advisor

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Designee

Carrie Castille/Deputy Assistant Commissioner

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Designee

Glenn T. Cambre/Public Health Executive Director

Absences:

George Barisich/Member (Louisiana Shrimp Harvester and member of the Louisiana Shrimp Association)

Harry Cheramie/Louisiana Shrimp Harvester Alternate

Jeff Mayne/Enforcement Ex-Officio Member/Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Designee

Mark Abraham is announced as the chairman to speak on behalf of the shrimp task force members. He gives members his contact information. He states he hopes this task force will make great accomplishments and end each meeting well.

Mr. Schexnayder speaks about Act 606 which is stated in the packet in binders that were handed to shrimp task force. He states this act was established by legislation under Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board. The shrimp task force like the crab and oyster task force was established to work on issues that affect the industry.

Mr. Abraham wanted to know how the funding is handled. What mechanism generates the funding?

Mr. Schexnayder said the funding will be covered under Agenda VII.

Clint Guidry wants to know who picks the members of the task force.

Mr. Schexnayder states that the Governor has authority to pick members of the task force.

Mr. Schexnayder explained that it would be a good idea for members on the task force to have alternates.

A motion was made by Clint Guidry to allow any alternate to step in for the absent member(s). There will be 3 alternates for the Shrimp Processor's, 2 alternates for the Shrimp Association and the Shrimp Harvester's will have a pool of alternates. The motion was seconded by Dean Blanchard. The motion carried unanimously.

David Lavergne spoke to members on filing of personal financial disclosure form with the Louisiana Board of Ethics. He stated that the form is in the binder. The file disclosure statement must be returned by may 15th of every year. This one is for the year 2010. Form asks business name, work information and report for member's spouse, and board commission task force information. Mr. Lavergne wanted to make sure members only fill out form for each committee members belong to. Schedule A contains employee information and spouse information. Schedule B contains income from state political subdivision (businesses owned, address and non-profit organization). Schedule F contains information about contributions to other funding sources.

Mr. Lavergne explained that members must mail the form or fax it. Members must sign the form. He states that there are penalty fees for submitting form past due date. He said that it would be a good idea to mail form certified to have receipt for proof of mailing.

Acy Cooper asked if it was up to the task force members to keep up with when documents are due. Mr. Schexnayder replied they will be kept informed.

Mr. Abraham asked about the members' terms of service on the task force.

Laura Deslatte stated that the term of service is based on the governor's will. Chairman's term of service is one year.

Mr. Schexnayder wants Ms. Deslatte to send an email to every member on the force with a link of personal disclosure form.

Mr. Schexnayder talks about adoption of standard operating procedures. Mr. Lavergne explains that this information is stated in the packet. Mr. Schexnayder explained that the operating procedures are the bylaws. The panel under Seafood Board makes recommendations to legislation. These laws contain information regarding meeting procedures.

Mr. Schexnayder asked members if they want to follow bylaws exactly.

Mr. Lavergne states that location of meetings and voting information are stated in laws. He discusses that audience is only allowed 3 minutes for speaking.

Ms. Deslatte stated that cards are placed on table for public to comment throughout meeting.

Members agree that following rules of law will make things easier.

Mr. Schexnayder discussed what meeting time works best for members.

Mr. Guidry had concerns about wording on Section 9 in bylaws about members not speaking on behalf of task force.

Mr. Abraham wants to know if there is any legal representation.

Cole Garrett (legal representative for wildlife and fisheries) states that he is not familiar with the laws but sure that they could be changed.

Mr. Abraham states that it would be a good idea to have member speak if he could not be present at a meeting.

Mr. Smith gave an example of an Oyster Task force member who spoke to the media and said they were a member but not speaking on behalf of the task force. Acy Cooper states that they should be able to say they are a member but not speaking on behalf of chairman.

Kristen Baumer states that only chairman should speak for the members but the members can voice personal views.

The intent of section 9A is not to muscle silence of shrimp task force.

A motion was made by Mr. Guidry that chairman speaks on behalf of task force but each member can speak on their personal views. The motion was seconded by Mr. Baumer. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Guidry to amend Section 4D and replace it with any alternate can step in for the members on task force. The motion was seconded by Andrew Blanchard. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Schexnayder asked task force if meetings in Baton Rouge okay and everyone agreed.

Section 8 part C Mr. Abraham can designate second chairman. Ms. Deslatte said that next meeting Mr. Abraham can select vice chairman in case he cannot attend. This will be put on the agenda for next meeting.

Mr. Schexnayder went over objectives of task force and explained the reason for the task force. He explained that lower shrimp prices caused the governor to create the task force. Members on the task force can vote for changes.

Mr. Guidry talked about Anti-Dumping laws and wants this titled into task force. Mr. Schexnayder will research into it and thinks that Anti-Dumping would link well.

Mr. Abraham had question regarding administration of funds. Ewell Smith explained that there are two accounts, shrimp trade account and marketing account. Wynnette Kees from fiscal explained that amount collected into fund varies according to shrimp gear license fees. Shrimp excise tax goes into conservation fund.

Legislation has the power to get rid of shrimp excise tax. Mr. Abraham wants to gather information on tax costs and administration costs and put this on the agenda for next meeting.

Mr. Smith explained how shrimp money flows into Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board. The Seafood Board has other funding sources and various grants. Wildlife and Fisheries puts license fees into different accounts that the State Treasury designated. The Seafood Board gets 5 dollars from every license sold. The shrimp license fees only go into the shrimp fund. Ms. Keys will get report to show breakdown of funding for the next meeting. Mr. Guidry wants to see the report so task force can figure out the best way to use money.

Mr. Smith discussed shrimp promotion and marketing activities. He talked about BP oil spill crisis, media, PR, and setting up news rooms. Every media network had used news room. Board members conducted 3,000 interviews and reached 3.5 billion people not including media. Board conducted perception study tests asking questions about quality of seafood. Board went to Boston Seafood shows and people that attended are asking fewer questions and are starting to understand the safety of the seafood. Louisiana is the most tested seafood and not one bad product has gone to the market. Mr. Smith also explained that there was a safety panel meeting and chefs came to the conference and panel answered their tough questions. The Board is involved in industry trade shows and handing out brochure information. At the industry shows, there were I-pads that scan badges on fisherman which would show the information about the commercial fisherman, quality seafood information, and where fisherman sells seafood. Once information is saved then email goes out to all of the industry. This program was put together in 7 weeks. Seafood Board is also working with the Hornets to promote market of Gulf Seafood. The Seafood Board's use of BP funds was explained by Mr. Smith. The money is used to hire an agency to conduct research. He stated that 35 applicants were interested in seafood testing research. The committee narrowed it down to top three applicants.

Workshops were conducted by the Seafood Board to get feedback on seafood issues. The workshops were conducted into three areas, legislation, communication and marketing. The marketing workshop discussed expanding partnerships, continuing tourism, brands like Tabasco, and consumer and chefs tracking seafood. The communication workshop targeted the consumer and safety quality and the health of seafood. The legislation workshop discussed other ways of funding, how to obtain more money, and research and statistics of sustaining funding source.

Every aspect of the workshops was well received by the group.

Mr. Smith explained the Health and Fitness Challenge on May 10th when industry meets with legislation at capital building and the governor makes the first cut in the oyster po-boy. Also, Mr. Smith talked about Seafood Cook off that occurs every year.

Mr. Guidry wanted to know if all of the BP funds are used for research. Mr. Smith explained that Seafood Board has control over BP funds. He said that money is used first for research then promoting fishing seasons for overall branding. Mr. Guidry asked if task force has any say on the use of these funds. Mr. Smith advised task force to create marketing committee to speak with the Seafood Board. The oyster task force has a marketing committee.

Mr. Smith stated that one firm out of three will get BP money to conduct research. Seafood Board is not throwing all the money into one agency. The Board will examine the best use of funding. Dean Blanchard said that Seafood Board is doing an excellent job maintaining quality seafood.

Mr. Baumer suggests that a committee, from this task force, be put together to help advise the promotion and marketing board.

Mr. Guidry addressed Mr. Baumer regarding funding left over from Gustav/Ike before BP oil spill and how these funds are being used.

Mr. Abraham stated that seafood safety should be addressed in a unified voice. He mentioned the numerous testing efforts performed by NOAA, FDA, LDHH, and LDWF to ensure only uncontaminated seafood enters the market. Mr. Abraham asked how Dean Blanchard would address someone telling him that his seafood was unsafe. Dean Blanchard said that is a personal opinion. Mr. Abraham said that if there is a problem we need to address the situation and if people are concerned about quality of seafood, we need to educate them. He emphasized that it is important for Louisiana citizens to speak the same message in regards to seafood.

Mr. Smith included that it is important to educate the public by releasing testing results, as they would most likely have more trust in government agency such as FDA.

Before Louisiana's seafood is nationally marketed, it needs to be fixed locally. Mr. Smith said that Seafood Board is working on this matter.

Randy Pausina asked Mr. Smith to better explain the Hornets Program. Mr. Pausina stated that the Hornets Program is funded by HUD funds from Office of Community and Development. The Hornets Arena is the only arena selling Louisiana Seafood and promoting quality of seafood. Hornets are making sure that commentaries coming to Louisiana get to taste Louisiana seafood. The goal for the next arena to promote Louisiana's seafood is the Saints Dome.

Jon Bell presented the Voluntary Shrimp Certification Program. Mr. Bell is a professor, a food scientist at LSU Agriculture Center and assists LDWF with developing the shrimp certification program. There is a steering committee that working with this program. Mr. Bell stated that this program is voluntary and the program was started because harvesters were getting low prices for their seafood and were protesting at capital. This program was created to start the creation of a

certified brand product and shrimp brand would be created first. The traceable part of the program allows people to track the origin of seafood and identify best handling practices. The product can be traced from the harvester to the consumer. This program will involve licensed dock holders, processors and commercial fishermen. The overall goal of the program is to enhance trip ticket program, track the product, enhance the quality of seafood and get better prices for seafood. There are enforcement requirements and safety compliance involved with this program.

Mr. Abraham wanted to know if individual is not in voluntary program is there a separate logo for not certified. Rene LeBreton from Seafood Board explained that there is only a logo for certified seafood product. There is one logo for certified and another logo for quality. Mr. LeBreton stated that two different elements were created and wants involvement from the task force to move forward on this issue. Mr. LeBreton stated that either Louisiana can wait for certification and watch other states catch up with state's trip ticket program or Louisiana can move forward with certification. Mr. Schexnayder stated that it would be a good idea for there to be a subcommittee on task force for seafood certification.

Dean Blanchard stated that all of the Gulf States need to be playing by the same rules. He stated that if fishermen get more for their seafood in another state than Louisiana then this will create a major problem for Louisiana seafood. Andrew Blanchard said that vessel owners don't know if there vessels are even able to meet certification requirements. Andrew Blanchard stated that industry needs to be included to inform everyone. Mr. Despoux stated that if fishermen don't get enough money for certified product and there are more costs than benefits then it is not even worth participating in this program. Mr. Pausina stated that program will not make it without the task force wanting it. Mr. Pausina stated that there is a long term funding statue and need to think about a program long term. Mr. Guidry stated that all groups need to agree with the program and make sure that there are low costs involved. Mr. Guidry stated that plan needs to be feasible and program needs to occur one step at a time if this is a better approach.

Mr. Smith stated that it will take longer to market a Gulf brand product than a Louisiana product because of the oil spill. Andrew Blanchard said that Louisiana shrimp should be marketed but Louisiana should work with other states. Mr. Baumer stated that should start program small and then expand bigger because some people follow rules and others break them.

Mr. Schexnayder stated that the state hired a third party company to examine MSC Stewardship Council Standards on sustainability of seafood (ex. pre-assessment on stock health, catch rates, habitat of species). There are 19 different criteria that will be examined. The state is talking with other states (Iceland, Alaska), and companies to see how certification is working in their areas. There is a draft report from the third party company that the state has not yet looked at. Mr. Schexnayder wants the task force to participate with their ideas as well.

Dean Blanchard stated that NOAA is blaming fishermen for killing turtles. Mr. Schexnayder stated that everyone needs to be working on a uniform front. Mr. Cooper stated that NOAA finds turtles on the beach and blames harvesters for killing the turtles and fishermen are not responsible.

Mr. Schexnayder presented shrimp management opportunities. He explained that bill for 2 year shrimp license moratorium didn't pass legislation. Turtle excluder devices cannot be enforced by the state. Mr. Guidry stated the reason for moratorium was to allow hard core fishermen to obtain more money for their seafood. The increase in numbers of boats and the high costs of fuel cause decrease in seafood production. Mr. Guidry stated at the present that there is no need for a moratorium because of the grant money and oil spill funding. This money has allowed fishermen to continue fishing and purchasing licenses. There is an overwhelming increase in licenses purchased after oil spill. Mr. Guidry stated that once numbers of licenses decline, the idea of moratorium can be revisited. Mr. Cooper stated that in order to work in BP Vessel Opportunity Program, commercial fishing license was required.

Mr. Schexnayder stated that mandatory use of TEDS is a federal law and part of the MSC sustainability requirement. He stated in order for seafood to meet MSC standards, seafood must score 60% or more in each category. Mr. Schexnayder would like NOAA to give a presentation at a future task force meeting. Mr. Cooper stated that Coast Guard is already checking for TEDS and doesn't like the idea of the state enforcing TEDS. Dean Blanchard stated that most fishermen want TEDS on their boats because it gets rid of turtles and bycatch.

Ms. Deslatte stated she had some housekeeping items. She explained about the travel authorization forms and travel reimbursement forms. The authorization form needs to be filled out in advance. The state reimbursement limit for travel is 99 miles round trip and costs of 48 cents per mile. Mr. Abraham said members either want to be excluded from travel or want to change the limit past 99 miles. The discussion of travel forms will be put on the agenda for next meeting. Ms. Deslatte explained that every time member travels, the form needs to be filled out and submitted once a month.

Mr. Guidry asked if meeting is being recorded live streamed because he knows people that enjoy watching it. He is informed that meeting is recorded live streamed and meetings will continue to be video live streamed.

Mr. Abraham wants members to put all meetings information in one binder.

Mr. Schexnayder asked the Panel to set a date for their next meeting. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday May 10th at 9:30 am.

A motion to adjourn was made by Danny Babin. The motion was second by Andrew Blanchard. The motion carried unanimously.